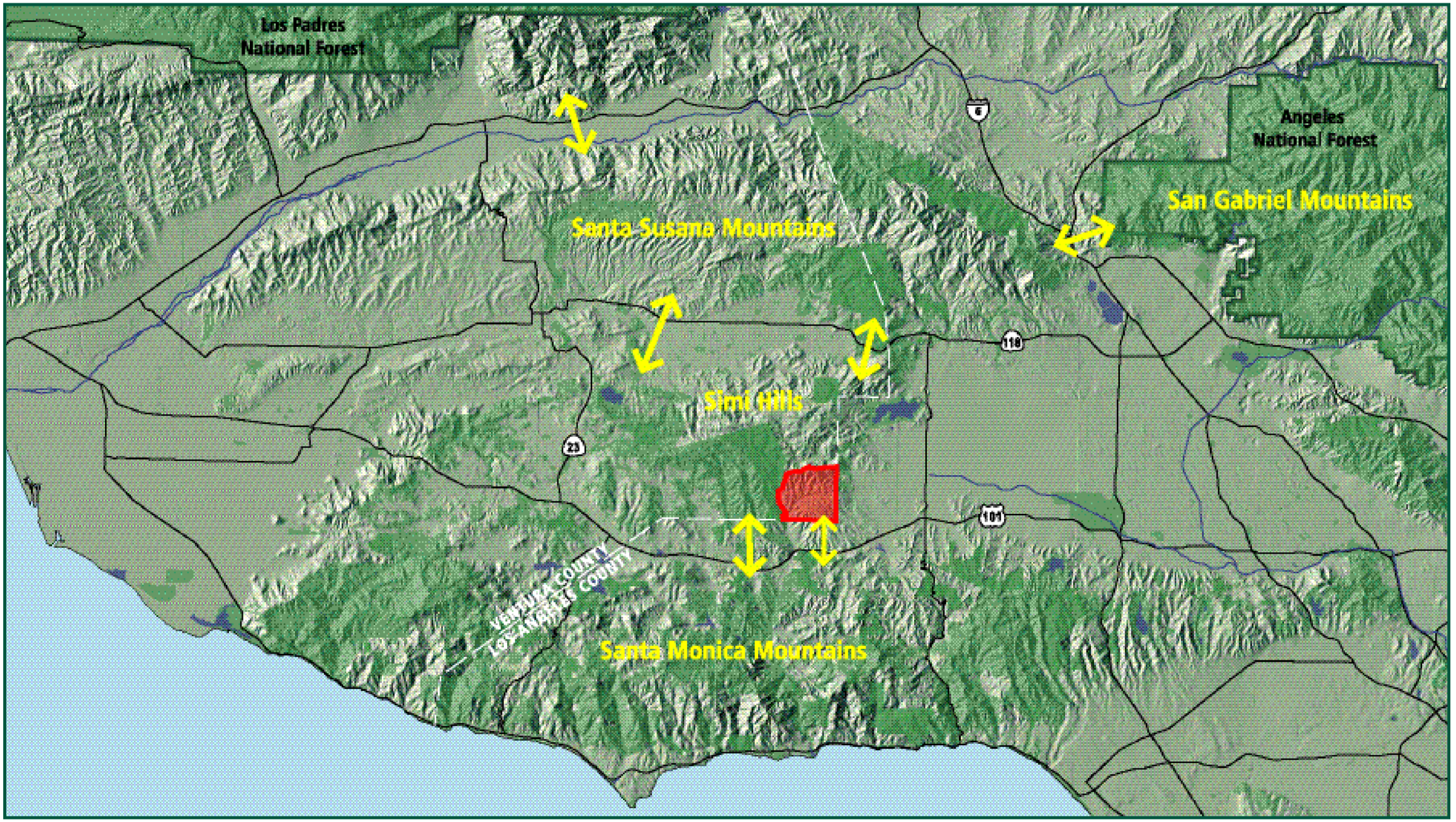
The Santa Susana Mountains, Simi Hills and the Santa Monica Mountains
A Mediterranean Ecosystem Spanning Two Counties



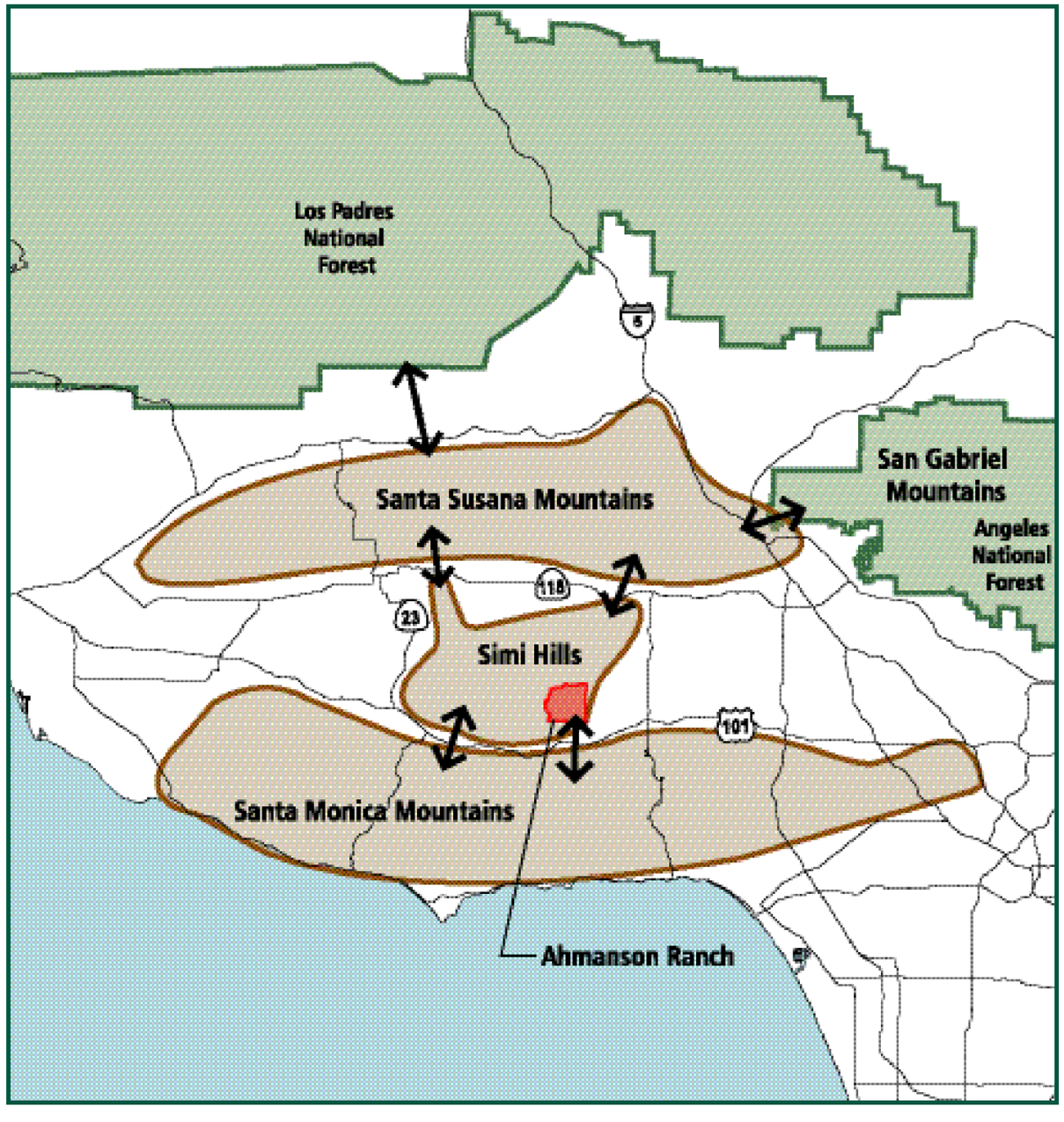
A Mediterranean Ecosystem Made Viable by Inter-mountain Range Habitat Linkages

Ahmanson Ranch—A Fundamental Ecosystem Element

The Simi Hills provide the only stepping stone for wildlife to replenish populations in the approximately 200 square mile Santa Monica Mountains ecosystem. However, to continue this function effectively, the Simi Hills must ultimately contain enough protected habitat to maintain small populations of badgers, mountain lions, bobcats, grey fox, long-tailed weasels, and mule deer. Equally important, the few remaining habitat linkages to freeway undercrossings must be adequately protected. The 2,783-acre Ahmanson Ranch is fundamental to accomplishing both these habitat protection objectives.

Highest Quality Core Habitat and Water Resources that Must Be Protected

Commissioned by the National Park Service in 1989, renowned conservation biologist, Dr. Michael Soulé, prepared minimum viable population analyses for the above target species in the Simi Hills, Santa Monica Mountains and Santa Susana Mountains. He concluded that existing sub-populations of mountain lions, badgers, grey fox and bobcats were too small to be self sustaining. The infusion of new animals into all of the ranges is essential. The Simi Hills contain the most vulnerable populations with just 32,000 acres of contiguous core open space. Only 16,000 acres of this core habitat are currently protected. The 2,783 acres of the Ahmanson Ranch contain the highest quality unprotected habitat in the range for all of the target species. Its rich resources include nine miles of USGS blueline drainage courses, three well-dispersed year-round water sources, gentle terrain, deep soils, and over 4,000 oak and walnut trees. The Ranch's water sources serve wildlife populations in the southeastern quarter of Simi Hills core habitat.



A Key Element to Maintain the Ecological Viability of Three Mediterranean Mountain Ranges